

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Job Training 2000

April 28, 1992

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Job Training 2000 Act." This legislation would reform the Federal vocational training system to meet the Nation's work force needs into the 21st century by establishing: (1) a network of local skill centers to serve as a common point of entry to vocational training; (2) a certification system to ensure that only high quality vocational training programs receive Federal funds; and (3) a voucher system for vocational training to enhance participant choice.

Currently, a myriad of programs administered by a number of Federal agencies offer vocational education and job training at a cost of billions of dollars each year. This investment in the federally supported education and training system should provide opportunities to acquire the vital skills to succeed in a changing economy. Unfortunately, the current reality is that services are disjointed, and administration is inefficient. Few individuals—especially young, low-income, unskilled people—are able to obtain crucial information on the quality of training programs and the job opportunities and skill requirements in the fields for which training is available.

The Job Training 2000 Act transforms this maze of programs into a vocational training system responsive to the needs of individuals, business, and the national economy.

Four key principles underlie the Job Training 2000 Act. First, the proposal is designed to simplify and coordinate services for individuals seeking vocational training or information relating to such training. Second, it would decentralize decision-making and create a flexible service delivery structure for public programs that reflects local labor market conditions. Third, it would ensure high standards of quality and accountability for federally funded vocational training programs. Fourth, it would encourage greater and more effective private sector involvement in the vocational training pro-

grams.

The Job Training 2000 initiative would be coordinated through the Private Industry Councils (PICs) formed under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). PICs are the public/private governing boards that oversee local job training programs in nearly 650 JTPA service delivery areas. A majority of PIC members are private sector representatives. Other members are from educational agencies, labor, community-based organizations, the public Employment Service, and economic development agencies.

Under the Job Training 2000 Act, the benefits of business community input, now available only to JTPA, would enhance other Federal vocational training programs. PICs would form the "management core" of the Job Training 2000 system and would oversee skill centers, certify (in conjunction with State agencies) federally funded vocational training programs, and manage the vocational training voucher system. Under this system, PICs would be accountable to Governors for their activities, who in turn would report on performance to a Federal Vocational Training Council.

The skill centers would be established under this Act as a one-stop entry point to provide workers and employers with easy access to information about vocational training, labor markets, and other services available throughout the community. The skill centers would be designated by the local PICs after consultations within the local community. These centers would replace the dozens of entry points now in each community. Centers would present a coherent menu of options and services to individuals seeking assistance: assessment of skill levels and service needs, information on occupations and earnings, career counseling and planning, employability development, information on federally funded vocational training programs, and referrals to agencies and programs providing a wide range of services.

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The skill centers would enter into written agreements regarding their operation with participating Federal vocational training programs. The programs would agree to provide certain core services only through the skill centers and would transfer sufficient resources to the skill centers to provide such services. These provisions would ensure improved client access, minimize duplication, and enhance the effectiveness of vocational training programs.

The Job Training 2000 Act also would establish a certification system for Federal vocational training that is based on performance. To be eligible to receive Federal vocational training funds, a program would have to provide effective training as measured by outcomes, including job placement, retention, and earnings. The PIC, in conjunction with the designated State agency, would certify programs that meet these standards. This system would increase the availability of information to clients regarding the performance of vocational training programs and ensure that Federal funds are only used for quality programs.

For the most part, vocational training provided under JTPA, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (postsecondary only), and the Food Stamp Employment and Training program would be provided

through a voucher system. The voucher system would be operated under a local agreement between the PIC and covered programs. The system would provide participants with the opportunity to choose from among certified service providers. The vouchers would also contain financial incentives for successful training outcomes. By promoting choice and competition among service providers, the establishment of this system would enhance the quality of vocational training.

This legislation provides an important opportunity to improve services to youths and adults needing to raise their skills for the labor market by focusing on the “consumer’s” needs rather than preserving outmoded and disjointed traditional approaches. Enactment of this legislation would make significant contributions to the country’s competitiveness by enhancing the opportunities available to our current and future workers and increasing the skills and productivity of our work force.

I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
April 28, 1992.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Federal Council on the Aging

April 28, 1992

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 204(f) of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3015(f)), I hereby transmit the Annual Report for 1991 of the Federal Council on the Aging. The report reflects the Council’s views in its role of examining

programs serving older Americans.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
April 28, 1992.